



Iowa Association of Water Agencies

October 22, 2010

Iowa Smart Planning Task Force
Rebuild Iowa Office
502 East 9th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319

RE: Draft Iowa Smart Planning Task Force – Draft Recommendations for Public Comment

Located throughout Iowa, the Iowa Association of Water Agencies (IAWA) member utilities provide drinking water to more than 1.5 million business and residential customers. The primary responsibility of IAWA member utilities is protecting public health by providing safe drinking water. Sustainably managing drinking water infrastructure and surface and groundwater resources is one of the biggest challenges facing the water industry. Through investment, policies, and actions supporting efficient, cost effective, and sustainable drinking water will support Iowa communities, enhance economic competitiveness, and promote healthy lifestyles.

IAWA strongly supports Recommendations 1 and 2, to establish a collaborative and cooperative, integrated planning process for Iowa, including state level investment. The last comprehensive state water plan was completed in 1979 (updated in 1985). Iowa's landscape and business environment have changed dramatically since that time. While Iowa is blessed with an abundance of water resources today, management and planning is critical to ensuring that same abundance is there for future generations. Iowans want a vision of what the state will look like in 20, 30, 50 years and IAWA believes this planning process could provide that glimpse into the future.

IAWA strongly supports Recommendation 3 and 4, which creates financial incentives and technical assistance to motivate cities, regions, and watersheds to plan for the future. The Department of Natural Resources is in the process of evaluating Iowa's groundwater resources. Groundwater is utilized as drinking water sources by many communities. These studies indicate there are places in Iowa where the availability of groundwater may be at risk in the not too distant future. Larger communities may utilize surface water as a drinking water source. Trends show the quality of surface water continues to decline in many areas. Flooding events are increasing in frequency and volume, threatening both public and private property. Land use can greatly impact the quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water. There are reports indicating Iowa is losing its valuable soil at an alarming rate. For these reasons planning and management of water and land resources is critical to Iowa's future economic viability.

IAWA supports Recommendation 5, which requests a single definition of, "local comprehensive plan." The definition should also provide direction as to how each of the community and regional plans compliment neighboring plans and ultimately the state as a whole.

We appreciate the Task Force members commitment in developing the Smart Planning Draft Recommendations. Thank you also for the the opportunity to comment on the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force, Draft Recommendations.

Sincerely,

Linda Kinman, Executive Director

On behalf of:
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